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Metropolitan Toronto's Blue Box
Program





BLUE BOX RECYCLING

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METROPOLITAN TORONTO'S BLUE BOX PROGRAM

How does the new Commissioners Street facility affect the Blue Box Program?

Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) are an integral part of the Blue Box Program. They are required to process the ever-increasing quantities of materials being collected. The state-of-the-art technology also allows for more efficient sorting and preparation for end-markets. This will be especially necessary as Metro's Blue Box Program expands to more multi-residential buildings, and new materials are added for collection.

The new facility also allows for less curbside separation and reduced collection costs while improving efficiency.

When will the Blue Box Program be expanded?

The Blue Box Program now reaches 100% of Metro households and approximately 60% of apartment buildings. Further expansion for apartment buildings is now on hold due to budget constraints. Magazines and catalogues are now accepted for recycling with newsprint. Mixed plastics and rigid aluminum products may also be added once end-markets are confirmed and processing capabilities are enhanced.

How much did the Commissioners Street facility cost?

Construction of the facility cost \$3.7 million with 70% of the funding from Metro's Waste Reserve Fund. Another \$1.1 million was received from the Ministry of the Environment and the project is eligible for funding in the amount of \$720,000.00 from Ontario Multi-Material Recycling Incorporated (OMMRI).

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Does the facility pay for itself?

The sale of the recyclable materials collected through the Blue Box program is expected to bring in approximately \$1.1 million in revenue each year. The cost of operating the facility is expected to be approximately \$1.8 million per year.

The operation of the new facility ultimately saves the Metropolitan Corporation money as rejection/contamination levels are lowered and efficiency of curbside collections is improved.

Have end markets been developed for the sorted materials?

Yes, markets have been located for HDPE plastics, PET plastics, clear and coloured glass, steel and aluminum containers. Preference has also been given to Canadian markets.

What percentage of materials are rejected?

About 10% of the materials which enter the facility are considered "contaminants" - materials that are not accepted for recycling. These materials are removed in the sorting process. An additional 5% of the incoming materials may also be rejected or lost to a residual bin during the sorting process. The contaminants and residual materials are disposed of in landfill. However, with increased public education and the potential expansion of the program, contamination levels should decrease.

Is the facility able to process broken glass?

The Commissioners Street MRF has a mixed broken glass beneficiation system which recovers the broken glass and prepares it to meet end-market specifications. Technology has been developed for using the glass as a sub-base material in roads and Provincial approval for such a use is expected soon. This will make the mixed broken glass more marketable.

